REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 16, 2007. Claims 1, 4-8, 11-15, 18-21 and 37-39 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 8 and 15 are in independent form, and have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Claim 22 has been canceled, and will not be mentioned further, and Claims 15 and 17-21 have been amended to be computer-medium claims; this action is taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 37-39 have been added to provide Applicant with a more complete scope of protection. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

In that Office Action, Claims 1, 4-8, 11-15 and 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from newly cited U.S. Patents 6,266,693 (Onaga), 6,622,157 (Heddaya et al.) and 6,615,207 (Lawrence), taken in combination.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite, for emphasis, that the first specific object is displayed in the tree list with a higher display priority than is the second specific object.

One very important feature of the apparatus of Claim 1 is that the display means is controlled to display such that the first specific object is displayed in the tree list with a higher display priority than the second specific object if the number of other information processing apparatus which exist between the first peripheral device and the information processing apparatus is smaller than that of other information processing apparatuses which exist between the second peripheral de vice and the information processing apparatus.

As Applicant understands the new rejection, the Examiner now agrees with Applicant that *Heddaya* and *Onaga* do not teach the tree display, and is relying upon *Lawrence* for that feature. *Lawrence* appears to Applicant, however, to be of little or no relevance to the present invention. In that patent, a user is able to create and edit a hierarchy of database searches, and can display the hierarchy in a tree display. In the portion particularly cited in the Office Action (col. 6, lines 31-45), root nodes in a tree are set to represent various respective table views of the database, and links are created between the root nodes and the corresponding tables. Subnodes are established to represent search queries, and links are created between these subnodes and the corresponding respective queries. A dialog screen is set up, in which a scrollable liste of columns is available for search in the database table, and an interactive dialog permits the addition or deletion of columns as nodes in the tree. The result of editing can be displaying as a new search query tree. It is not seen how one of merely ordinary skill, having these three patents, would possibly have been led to the arrangement recited in Claim 1.

Since as far as Applicant can tell the *Lawrence* arrangement does not appear to have direct relevance to the claimed invention, it appears to Applicant that the Examiner may be asserting that any GUI utilizing a tree display would render this feature of the claims obvious, if taken in combination with *Onaga* and *Heddaya*. The proffered motivation for the combination is that one of ordinary skill, knowing of tree displays, would be motivated to use such a display wherever such a display would serve any purpose, and in whatever way might serve. This, however, amounts to saying that there is *no* use of a tree display that could ever be unobvious. Applicant believes such a position to

be logically untenable, and to be inconsistent with the Patent Statute. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the prior-art rejection of Claim 1.

Applicant also notes that newly added Claim 37, which depends from Claim 1, further recites that the first specific object is placed at a higher position in the tree list than the second specific object. This feature is believed to be very clearly absent from any construction that could ben arrived at by a person of merely ordinary skill, from any consideration of *Onaga*, *Heddaya* and *Lawrence*, taken separately or in any possible combination.

Independent Claims 8 and 15 are, respectively, a method and a computer-readable medium claim corresponding to apparatus Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant's opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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